

DUST AND ASBESTOS CONCERNS

For Businesses

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the health concern associated with the removal of the fire debris from my business? Dust and possibly asbestos could become airborne if stirred up by wind or simply by moving the debris. Ashes and debris could also contain lead or mercury and organic chemicals released by burning wood and plastics. Avoid breathing any dust raised from activities at these locations. Typical symptoms related to short-term exposure to particulates may include itchy eyes, coughing, and upper airway irritation. Other potential health effects may include headache, dizziness, and nausea. People with pre-existing conditions such as asthma or other respiratory problems should avoid exposure. Breathing large amounts of asbestos fibers, especially over an extended period of time, can lead to respiratory disease in some persons exposed.

How will business owners' handling and disposal requirements differ from home owners' requirements? Proper handling and disposal of fire debris, which may contain asbestos, is regulated by the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Pima County Department of Environmental Quality (PDEQ). The federal government does not regulate debris from residences.

What are the handling and disposal requirements for businesses? Federal regulations require businesses to submit an Asbestos/NESHAP (National Emissions Standard for Hazardous Air Pollutant) Notification to PDEQ. The NESHAP prescribes minimum work practices that must be followed and the waste must be disposed of in compliance with the regulations.

What is Pima County doing to assist businesses with this process? Pima County Environmental Quality will assign an Air Quality Inspector to the community to accept notifications, discuss regulatory requirements, and address concerns. To facilitate expeditious clean up, Pima County will waive the mandatory 10-day waiting period for demolitions and asbestos removals. Contractors are still required to submit a NESHAP Notification.

For further information, contact Kathi Lawrence at 740-3369.